



COVENANT

Bible-Presbyterian Church

Preaching Christ for His Glory and His Kingdom

Order of Worship — 9 December 2018

Theme for the Year: "King Jesus Must Reign" (1 Corinthians 15:25)

Prelude	<i>The Lord Is in His Holy Temple</i>
Call to Worship	
*Opening Hymn	434 - <i>Our Great Saviour</i>
*Invocation & † <i>Gloria Patri</i>	
Scripture Reading	Psalm 37:1-11, 23-24
Hymn	TP 37:1-9
Tithes & Offering	
*† <i>Doxology</i> & Offertory Prayer	
Scripture Reading	1 Kings 17:1-16
Hymn	55 - <i>God Moves in a Mysterious Way</i>
Confession of Faith & Pastoral Prayer	
Sermon	"Elijah: The Refining of Faith"
*Closing Hymn	539 - <i>Something for Thee</i>
*Benediction & <i>Threefold Amen</i>	
Silent Prayer & Postlude	
Announcements	<i>*Congregation standing</i>

†Glory be to the Father, and to the Son:
And to the Holy Ghost;
As it was in the beginning,
Is now and ever shall be:
World without end. Amen.

††Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise him, all creatures here below;
Praise him above, ye heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.
Amen.

Covenant Bible-Presbyterian Church meets every Sunday at 10:00 am
at 47 Davis Road, Attadale, Western Australia

Website: www.covenantbpc.org.au

Contact: pastor@covenantbpc.org.au

The Role of Experience

We're living in a day when personal experience has been elevated above everything else as the final criterion of right and wrong.

Just think of all of the people who try to justify themselves on the basis of what they feel. Divorce is routinely excused on the basis of a married couple's no longer feeling like they are in love.

We are told that homosexuality should be embraced as a moral good because some homosexuals report having felt an attraction to the same sex from a young age.

Even many professing Christians make their decisions about right and wrong based on what they feel.

It's hard to have a discussion with someone who makes their experience the final arbiter of reality.

Many people embrace the old adage that "a person with an experience is never at the mercy of a person with an argument."

Ultimately, we have to disagree with this assertion, but not because experience is not a valuable tutor. It can help us connect theory to practice and abstract concepts to concrete situations.

It assists us in sifting through the nuances of living in this complex world. There are even some experiences that seem to prove that experience trumps argumentation.

I think of the example of Roger Bannister. Before 1954, many people argued that no human being could run a mile in under four minutes. Bannister broke that record, proving by experience that the argument was invalid.

The problem is not that experience can never outweigh an argument; we know from the history of science that the experience of empirical investigation has often overturned prevailing arguments.

The problem is the idea that the person with an experience is never at the mercy of a person with an argument. In many cases, sound argument trumps experience. This is particularly true when the debate concerns personal experience versus a sound understanding of the Word of God.

I remember one occasion on which a lady approached me and said, "*Dr. Sproul, for thirty years I have been married to a kind man and a good provider who is not a Christian. Finally, I could no longer stand not having in common with him the most important thing in my life-my faith. So, I left him. But he's been calling me daily and begging me to come back. What do you think God wants me to do?*"

"*That's easy,*" I said. "*Your husband's lack of Christian faith is no grounds for a divorce according to 1 Corinthians 7. So, God's will is that you return to him.*"

The woman did not like my answer and said it wasn't a good one because I didn't know what it was like to live with her husband.

I responded, "*Ma'am, you did not ask me what I would do if I were in your shoes. Perhaps I would have backed out long before you did, but that's irrelevant to the matter. You asked me about the will of God, and that is clear in this situation. Your experience is not a license to disobey God.*"

I'm thankful to report that when the woman saw that she was asking God to make an exception just for her, she repented and returned to her husband.

That woman's argument is duplicated every day among many Christians who subject the Word of God to their experience.

Too often, when our experience conflicts with the Word of God, we set aside the Scriptures. We might take refuge in

public opinion or the most recent psychological studies.

We allow the common experience of people around us to become normative, denying the wisdom and authority of God in favor of the collective experience of fallen human beings.

Truthfully, we all know that experience is often a good teacher. But experience is never the best teacher. God, of course, is the best teacher.

Why? Because He instructs us from the perspective of eternity and from the riches of His omniscience.

Sometimes we try to cover up our reliance on experience with more orthodox-sounding language.

I can't tell you the number of times I've heard Christians tell me that the Holy Spirit led them to do things Scripture clearly forbids or that God gave them peace about their decision to act in a way that is clearly contrary to the law of God.

But that's blasphemous slander against the Spirit, as if He would ever countenance sin. It's bad enough to blame the devil for our own decisions, but we put ourselves in grave danger when we appeal to the Spirit to justify our transgressions.

One of the most powerful devices of manipulation we've ever designed is to

claim that we have experienced the Spirit's approval of our actions.

How can anyone dare contradict us if we claim divine authority for what we want to do? The result is that we end up silencing any questions about our behavior.

But Scripture tells us that the Holy Spirit leads us to holiness, not to sin, and if the Spirit inspired the Scriptures, any experience we have that suggests we can go against biblical teaching cannot be from Him.

As long as we live on this side of heaven, we must deal with the fallenness of our bodies and souls. Seeking to make our experience determinative of right and wrong means repeating Adam and Eve's sin.

Why did they disobey the Lord? Because they trusted their experience that told them *"the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise"* (Gen. 3:6).

They ignored the promises and warnings God revealed to them regarding the fruit of the forbidden tree.

Experience can and should teach us, but it can never be the final arbiter of right and wrong. That role belongs to our Creator alone, and His Word gives us the standards by which we must live.

~ RC Sproul, *Ligonier Ministries*



Westminster Shorter Catechism

Q. 63. Which is the fifth commandment?

A. The fifth commandment is, Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

Q. 64. What is required in the fifth commandment?

A. The fifth commandment requireth the preserving the honor, and performing the duties, belonging to everyone in their several places and relations, as superiors, inferiors, or equals.

Worship Service Roster

<i>Service</i>	<i>Next Week (9.12.18)</i>	<i>Next Week (16.12.18)</i>
Speaker	Glen Lock	John MacRae
Worship Leader	Jimmy Orchard	Chris Budiman
Pianist	Merilyn Woo	Eugene Lim
Welcomers	Josephine Austin & Wendy Gong	Danny & Susie Tan
Offering Stewards	Vincent Chiu*, Micah Chiang* Kim Leow, Eugene Lim	Jansen Ng*, Yen Fye Yap* David Pang, Jacob Woo
Ushers	Joyce Ng, Jesslyn Leow	Josephine Austin, Rebecca Lee
Kitchen Duties	Peggy Woo*, Dina Portillo Rosemary Fitzpatrick	August Ng*, Val Withnell Debbie Blake
PA Duty	Ian Tay	Ken Hong
<i>Prayer Meeting</i>	<i>14 December 2018</i>	<i>21 December 2018</i>
Facilitator	Jimmy Orchard	Jimmy Orchard
Pianist	Nancy Lim	Ian Tay

Announcements

1. A warm welcome to all worshipers. May God richly bless you. Please stay behind after the service for fellowship and tea.
2. We welcome Rev Glen Lock to our pulpit today.
3. Next week's speaker is Rev John MacRae. Message: "To Fulfil What the Lord Said" (Matthew 1:18-25).
4. Next week's Junior Worship message: "The Chosen Will Believe" (Acts 13:42-52). Speaker: Grace Wang.
5. Pastor is away for overseas ministry till 24 December. Worshipers needing pastoral care can contact Elders Jimmy Orchard and Johnson Lim.
6. Adult Bible Class (9,16,23 Dec) - Understanding the Parables.
7. Christmas Day Service & Fellowship Lunch. Tuesday, 25 December 2018. Lunch after the service - please bring a dish to share.
8. Bible Conference 2019. Dates: 22-25 April 2019. Venue: Hotel Lord Forrest, Bunbury. Theme: Strength in Weakness. Speaker: Pastor Josh Williamson. Register by 31 December 2018 for early bird fees. Registration forms available at foyer. Any enquiries, please contact Micah Chiang or Vincent Chiu.

Appointments for the Week

WED 10:00 am Craft Group
 FRI 7:30 pm CBI & Prayer Meeting
 SUN 9:00 am Sunday School
 10:00 am Worship Service

Last Lord's Day Tithes & Offering, & Attendance

General Fund - \$2,096.35 (*DD - \$200.00). Missions Fund - \$200.00 (*DD - 100.00). Building Fund - \$4,500.00 (*DD - \$4,100.00, #626 - \$100.00, #627 - \$100.00, #628 - \$200.00). Total Tithes & Offering - \$6,796.35.
 Attendance - 137.

**DD: direct deposit*

Elders: **Mark Chen (Pastor)** 6114 4242, 0415 932 373. **Jimmy Orchard** 0413 274 407.

Johnson Lim 0402 145 682. Deacons: **Jacob Woo** 0421 212 206. **Vincent Chiu** 0417 929 149.